

U.S. Department of Education
2018 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [] Non-public

For Public Schools only: (Check all that apply) [] Title I [] Charter [] Magnet [] Choice

Name of Principal Mr. Larry Hood

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name Center Hill Middle School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 8756 Forest Hill Irene Lane

(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

Olive Branch MS 38654-9024
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County Desoto County

Telephone (662) 892-6800

Fax

Web site/URL

http://chms.desotocountyschools.org

/

E-mail larry.hood@dcsms.org

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*Mr. Cory Uselton

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other) E-mail cory.uselton@dcsms.org

District Name Desoto County School District Tel. (662) 449-7100

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board

President/Chairperson Mrs. Shelia Riley

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date _____

(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and uploaded via the online portal.

**Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

Part I – Eligibility Certification

The signatures on the first page of this application (cover page) certify that each of the statements below, concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education and National Blue Ribbon Schools requirements, are true and correct.

1. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.)
2. All nominated public schools must meet the state's performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group and all subgroups, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
3. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2018 in order to meet all eligibility requirements. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2012 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
6. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, or 2017.
7. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's application and/or rescind a school's award if irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state.
8. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.
9. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
10. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
11. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
12. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Data should be provided for the most recent school year (2017-2018) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 22 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 8 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 8 High schools
 - 4 K-12 schools
- 42 TOTAL

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:
- Urban or large central city
 - Suburban
 - Rural or small city/town
3. Number of students as of October 1, 2017 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	0	0	0
1	0	0	0
2	0	0	0
3	0	0	0
4	0	0	0
5	0	0	0
6	140	132	272
7	143	139	282
8	137	134	271
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	420	405	825

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 1 % Asian
 - 37 % Black or African American
 - 7 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 1 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 53 % White
 - 0 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

(Only these seven standard categories should be used to report the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The Final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic Data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.)

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2016 – 2017 school year: 6%

If the mobility rate is above 15%, please explain.

This rate should be calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	30
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	17
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	47
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2016	806
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.06
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	6

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 5 %
40 Total number ELL

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
Spanish, Arabic, Chinese

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 45 %
Total number students who qualify: 369

8. Students receiving special education services: 14 %
114 Total number of students served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional conditions. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <u>14</u> Autism | <u>2</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>23</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed | <u>56</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>5</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>5</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>1</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>7</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>1</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 1
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	3
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	38
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	7
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	6
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	2

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 21:1

12. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

Required Information	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013
Daily student attendance	94%	95%	94%	95%	95%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

13. **For high schools only, that is, schools ending in grade 12 or higher.**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2017.

Post-Secondary Status	
Graduating class size	0
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	0%
Enrolled in a community college	0%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	0%
Joined the military or other public service	0%
Other	0%

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.

Yes No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award.

15. In a couple of sentences, provide the school's mission or vision statement.

Our expectation is to grow every student academically, socially, and emotionally for a well rounded educational experience.

16. **For public schools only**, if the school is a magnet, charter, or choice school, explain how students are chosen to attend.

PART III – SUMMARY

Upon entering Center Hill Middle School, you are welcomed by trophy cases that point the way towards eight STAR School banners that celebrate our history and expectation of success. Being a Mustang reflects the mission of Desoto County Schools who hold safety as its highest priority followed closely by academics. Directly situated on the state line of Tennessee where the adjoining property is part of the Memphis metropolitan area, CHMS services a variety of socioeconomic families seeking to better their students' futures. As a result, our learners face short-term enrollments as teachers review, reinforce, and remediate academic gaps as well as acceptable social behaviors while also striving to meet state standards.

Bloomberg Business Weekly has named Olive Branch, Mississippi the fastest growing city in the nation over the past two decades. Over 36,000 people now call Olive Branch home. A quickly growing population resulted in the need for increased classroom space to keep student to teacher ratios manageable. Housed in the high school for three years, CHMS faced many challenges as the high school and middle school divided into two separate facilities. Center Hill Middle carried with it, strong traditions taking its name from the community and its mascot, the Mustang, from the surrounding horse farms. Presently as the result of continued growth, CHMS is in the process of constructing four additional classrooms to house computer labs.

Mustang Pride begins in pre-kindergarten at our two elementary schools and continues through twelfth grade at Center Hill High School. There is a common thread. Smooth transitions are insured through 5th grade and 8th grade introductions to the climate in the next step of their educational path. All Center Hill Schools celebrate the annual Homecoming Parade involving not only all four schools but also the community investment of businesses, government, and social clubs. Being a Mustang is a life-long community experience in which alumni pride fully proclaim their Mustang heritage.

Center Hill Middle School encourages, recognizes, and rewards student effort and achievement through many incentives and events. From daily postings of kindness awards along with Mustangs of the week, quarterly honors breakfast for Academic All-stars and Accelerated Reader parties, and culminating into annual awards ceremonies and Field Day events, students are encouraged to work hard to reach not only their academic potential but also to build character as future community leaders. As we service and work with a diverse population of students, our learners of various ability levels mentor our youngest Mustangs at Overpark Elementary through peer reading buddies.

We have tiered programs that contribute to student success in the academic curriculum areas. Study Hall offers students who are academically proficient an opportunity to complete homework assignments and read. Study Skills Class is for average to low performing students with the goal of developing organizational skills, self-management skills, both personally and academically, through the use of computers and mentorship. Moby Max computer programs remediate and reinforce basic English and mathematical skills for low performing students. Learning Lab is designed for those students with learning differences who need additional support in all areas: academic, personal, and social. Read180 is an inclusion class that serves students who have a significant deficit in reading and writing skills. Mind Play is used by our Special Education Department to remediate low reading levels. Additionally, peer tutoring is available for all learners during their elective period for any academic subject.

Efforts of all students are acknowledged; no Mustang is left behind. There is something for everyone. Opportunities for school involvement include: honor choir, elite choir, drama club, dance, cheer, various athletic teams, open mic (poetry jam), 8th grade dance, spelling bee, chess club, yearbook staff, Mustang Gazette, scrabble club, MTV2 (broadcasting), youth and government, BETA club (tutoring), Washington D.C. trip, knowledge bowl, speech and debate, student council, and band.

Center Hill Middle School promotes values within our students through Anti-Drug Pledge, Red Ribbon Week, Music Appreciation Month, Anti-Bullying Campaigns, Walk of Champions (Special Olympics), and Kindness Mustang Awards. We celebrate Black History Month through various projects such as trivia questions asked through the month of February, a 6th grade Wax Museum honoring historic African

Americans, and subject area teachers celebrate Black History Month through interdisciplinary projects. To experience the joy and pride of giving back to the community, Mustangs use their gifts and talents to support worthy causes such as Toys for Tots, Toys for FedEx House, Shoe Boxes for Soldiers, Memphis Food Bank Can Drive, Mid-South Child Advocacy Center collections, Mustang Meals (for hungry elementary students), and support for the local animal shelter.

Teachers, parents, students, and community members “Respect the Hill.” High expectations pave the way for academic achievement. If you walked our halls, you would see a family atmosphere where teachers go above and beyond and accept these children as our personal responsibility.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

The core curriculum at Center Hill Middle School is aligned to the Mississippi Department of Education College and Career-Ready Standards, which seeks to increase rigor to help students prepare for success in a global economy. Teachers scaffold instruction by ensuring students have adequate prerequisite knowledge so that they may demonstrate conceptual understanding and evidence of knowledge.

Reading is emphasized in all content areas but is specifically targeted in reading/English language arts classes. Teachers select texts that expose students to a wide variety of genres and lexile levels. Text difficulty increases throughout the year to challenge students to grow in their reading abilities. The school year is broken into four nine weeks segments, and teachers develop a unit based on the curriculum for each nine weeks segments. As the amount of objectives covered throughout the year is vast, teachers rely on a district created pacing guide to confirm all objectives are adequately addressed over the course of four units. Each unit includes at least one extended text and at least four shorter supplementary texts to address the objectives on the pacing guide for the appropriate nine weeks. Students write routinely throughout the year, but each nine weeks the teacher focuses on either narrative, argumentative, persuasive, or informative writing. Speaking and listening objectives help students build on the thoughts of others and communicate effectively. Teachers seek to keep students engaged by creating active readers, encouraging a love of reading, appealing to interests, and relating to students' lives. Students are responsible for their learning and often help each other in reviewing foundational skills as the school encourages cooperative learning.

Math classes use cooperative learning to increase student engagement. The students learn ratios and proportional relationships, number system, expressions and equations, geometry, statistics and probability, and functions. Compacted math with algebra is offered in seventh and eighth grades. The curriculum seeks to include experiences that reflect the value of math in the real world, challenging students to achieve a conceptual understanding of the material. The curriculum requires students to move past simply following procedure by stimulating them to understand the material on a deeper level, requiring them to justify and explain mathematical concepts. Students should persevere in solving problems, reasoning abstractly and quantitatively. Students are engaged in the curriculum by error analysis assignments in which they are presented with a completed mathematical problem that contains an error. Students must work together to find and explain the error. The collaborative groups allow the students to engage in the material to reasonably argue their answers and model real-world mathematical concepts. While students engage in abstract concepts frequently, organizing principles help to add structure to the curriculum. Technology further engages students as they receive online homework help and use calculators to increase mathematical understanding.

The sixth grade curriculum uses geography to help students understand civic engagement, providing a foundation for comprehending current events and global affairs. Students study the physical landscapes of the Western Hemisphere. Students interpret and use, graphs, charts, political cartoons, primary documents, and other social studies tools. The seventh grade course also uses geography to explore the cultural and historical developments of the world from prehistoric times to the Age of Enlightenment in the 18th Century. The curriculum includes study of the earliest civilizations and moves to the evolution of civilizations and continuing to individual nation/states to help students understand global affairs. The eighth grade focuses on the United States' development from Exploration through Reconstruction. Students study the democratic development of the United States, exploring conflicts over political and economic development. Interactive notebooks and collaborative projects help to keep the students engaged.

The science classes also involve the community with guest speakers such as Mr. DeFazio, Wildlife Biologist from the USDA in New Albany, MS. The curriculum focuses on connecting life science, physical science, and Earth and space science to ecology and interdependence, motions, forces, and energy, Earth systems and cycles. To inspire a student centered classroom instead of a teacher centered classroom, the curriculum encourages students to be active in the classroom so that they become independent, skilled, and scientifically

literate. Teachers ensure student engagement by prompting students to ask questions and define problems and then obtain and evaluate evidence. This allows students to construct explanations and design solutions to problems.

College and career readiness is established using a variety of methods at CHMS. In mathematics and science, the focus is on real world application through scaffolding and extension of previous knowledge. Teachers encourage the use of proven mathematical practices: make sense of the problem, reason abstractly and quantitatively, construct viable arguments, model, use tools, attend to precision, and use structure and regularity in reasoning through problems. In English, the advancement of standards are designed to be relative to the real world and taught in a sequence that allows for a natural development of mastery, reflecting the knowledge and abilities needed to be successful in a career or college setting.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Broadcasting

The broadcasting program, Mustang Television 2 (MTV2), is a communication/journalism elective opportunity for seventh and eighth grade students who audition. The students keep the staff and the student body informed on the latest school news by recording and broadcasting a daily news show. The students learn to conduct interviews and utilize editing software, cameras, and lighting equipment. They also produce unique skits and videos, all of which foster productive discussions and collaborative learning, as well as support public speaking and creative writing.

Newsletter

The monthly newsletter program is an elective available for seventh and eighth graders. The course requires students to research various events and issues, plus interview at least five students or faculty members. The students organize, produce, and distribute the newsletter, which includes news articles, a feature story article, and an investigative report.

Choir

Four chorus courses with various skill levels are offered as an elective to sixth, seventh, and eighth graders. Choir offers opportunities to grow musically, socially, and academically through the study and performance of quality choral literature. The elite choir competes in three or more competitions annually. All choirs perform in three or more concerts annually. Choral music uses performance-based learning to foster four essential skills: communication, critical thinking, collaboration, and creativity. The students also have the opportunity to compose or improvise music themselves.

Drama

The drama club introduces students to the fundamental skills of acting by rehearsing character analyses and learning to create dramatic characters. Acting skills are further developed through scene work, group work, and monologues. Sixth, seventh, and eighth graders audition to participate in the drama club, which is an after school program. Students learn communication skills, cooperation, self-confidence, and imagination through participation.

Open Mic

Open mic is a creative writing forum for all students in grades sixth, seventh, and eighth. Students meet after school to create, critique, and analyze original student-created stories, articles, lyrics, poetry, and art. The community of expression fostered via open mic gives the students a cultural outlet and promotes appreciation of writing on a school-wide level.

PE/Health/Nutrition

The physical education program is designed to encourage students to develop fitness and a positive attitude in team and group activities. It improves motor skills and an understanding of strategic tactics and is a required course for sixth, seventh, and eighth graders. The physical education program emphasizes living a physically active lifestyle, promoting responsible personal and social behavior that respects self and others. Students are taught health related topics such as nutrition, drug/alcohol awareness, sexual abstinence, and consequences of bad choices.

Technology/Library/Media

The library media center exists primarily for education purposes, fostering independent, lifelong learners and readers. The library offers enrichment and resource materials for students and faculty, selected by evaluating the interest, vocabulary, maturity, and ability levels of all students.

The library is open during the school day for students to visit, browse, leisurely read, research, complete assignment and homework, etc. All sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students attend the library for a class period every other week. During this time the students are provided with instruction and guidance to utilizing the library and research materials, which include a collection of books, non-print materials, and technology designed to complement and enrich the school's curriculum.

Gifted

The gifted program explores thematic units, incorporating thinking skills, creativity, information literacy, success skills, affective skills (social/emotional), and communication. Gifted is a sixth grade elective course in which the student must qualify to participate. Sixth, seventh, and eighth grade gifted students have the opportunity to participate in both the Chess Club and Knowledge Bowl Club.

Yearbook

Yearbook is an elective course and meets daily. The student yearbook staff consists of students who are recommended and selected each year. The yearbook staff takes photographs, digitally creates and designs the yearbook, advertises, and distributes the yearbooks to all students and faculty who purchase a book.

Speech and Debate

The speech and debate club is an opportunity for students to practice and showcase their public speaking abilities through a variety of events including: impromptu, storytelling, poetry, prose, public forum debate, declamation, and duet acting. Students are recommended by teachers, and after auditions, they are selected to participate in the club.

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

The faculty at Center Hill Middle School have created a dynamic learning environment for students blending traditional methods with new techniques for student success.

Our teachers use a variety of approaches each day to meet students' learning styles and ability levels. Direct instruction is blended with the use of interactive projectors to enhance interest. Kagan strategies are used to increase engagement such as carousel activities and think/pair/share. Formative assessment occurs throughout class informing instruction. Some of these include pretest, quick writes, use of dry erase boards and exit tickets.

Our summative assessments also provide valuable information which informs future instruction and remedial activities. CHMS gives Case 21 Benchmark Assessments twice per year in English and Mathematics and three times per year in Science. These assessments provide valuable insight as to how students are progressing towards our standards. Throughout the year CHMS also uses mid-term and nine week assessments. In addition to individual student progress, these help teachers identify areas of instruction which were deficient so they can reteach necessary concepts. Teachers also use this data to differentiate instruction, providing remediation and enrichment activities as needed on particular skills and standards. These activities vary by classroom but include choice boards, small group instruction, peer tutoring, and technology supports such as Moby Max which is a computer based program meeting students where they are and providing scaffolding of instruction to move them forward. These efforts help teachers work toward closing gaps with at risk populations.

Other technological supports utilized include instructional videos, infographics, audiobooks and math games. CHMS also uses the Read 180 program as a class for students who are reading well below grade level. This provides students instruction on their level through a computer program integrated with small group instruction and independent choice reading. Each year CHMS sees tremendous growth for our

students who participate in this so that by Eighth grade, they are performing close enough to grade level to transition to a traditional Language Arts class. Additionally, teachers use passages of material on the same content but with differing Lexile levels to meet students where they are to gain understanding of content.

CHMS also provides enrichment classes for students who are performing well above grade level in English and Mathematics. These are offered during the Seventh and Eighth grade years. Students are selected based on final grades in the prior class as well as teacher recommendations. These classes allow students to go deeper in the content as well as go beyond the grade level standards.

CHMS students engage in problem solving and project based learning throughout the year and across the curriculum. In Science classes, students have participated in multiple STEM activities including creating a paper airplane to learn about the engineering design process. In Social Studies, students created a “Wax Museum” learning about important African Americans. Additionally, Social Studies students participated in a competition for the state’s bicentennial, addressing future needs for the betterment of our region through art or essay. In English classes, students learned about argumentative writing by investigating a fictional “Candy Caper” and creating an argument as to why a particular suspect was guilty.

Our Math classes provide choice boards that allow students to dig into extended problem solving. Students are able to select activities that interest them on their ability level. Some choices provide enrichment while others are remedial in nature.

CHMS Teachers meet regularly with district instructional specialist and each other to discuss effective instructional practices to best meet student needs. Many teachers also meet weekly to discuss upcoming lessons. During this time, teachers review standards that will be taught during the upcoming week and examine how the school performed on the standard on the state assessment in the prior year. This information helps inform instruction going forward. We also discuss individual students who are struggling and plan strategies to help such as small group instruction, peer tutoring or monitoring another class to hear instruction twice just to name a few.

CHMS is a high performing school earning an A rating in the state of Mississippi’s accountability model; however, the faculty continuously works to make improvements to meet students’ needs, analyze data, and improve instruction to better prepare CHMS students for high school.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

Fostering a positive school climate is an essential component of school success. We have a “gift” for turning negativity into positivity and helping teachers, students, and parents see the silver lining in all situations. At Center Hill Middle School, we all realize that listening, trusting, sharing and constructing goals as a unit are vital to creating a positive school environment. We have an open door policy that allows students, teachers, parents and community voices and opinions to be heard and play a crucial role in our decision making. We provide individual student planning, academic advising, peer tutoring, conflict resolution, career exploration, referrals for community resources for support and academic success, and the Counseling Center posts the Middle Years newsletter each month for parents on their webpage.

Our teachers stress the importance of having a solid academic foundation; however, they also understand that it is equally as important to encourage and build social, emotional, and moral foundations into the academic platform. Our students feel comfortable enough to openly express their thoughts and insecurities.

We also understand the importance of creating a staff environment in which the teachers are relaxed enough to convene with one another to share ideas and wisdom and make decisions to benefit the students and staff, all the while establishing a trusting environment. Each month, a teacher and employee are showcased on a display in the front of our building and receive special privileges. Our teachers are an asset to the CHMS team. We have a dedicated staff that proudly exhibits Mustang pride.

It is evident from our exemplary attendance records that our students want to attend school. They strive to do well, actively participate in the learning process and take responsibility for their schoolwork. Positive relationships have been established, so students are comfortable going to teachers and other adults in the building for help or simply to hear an encouraging word. Our positive behavioral interventions and supports motto is to “Be Responsible – Be Respectful – Be Ready”.

At CHMS, our students feel safe and secure which allows them to thrive on an academic, social, and emotional level. Our Anti-Bullying and Prevention activities emphasize the importance of standing up for each other as a Mustang family. Throughout the building, students and staff members have these visuals posted that encourage, motivate and inspire. At CHMS kindness matters. We model and expect our students to be kind and respectful, thus we celebrate this by rewarding students and teachers when they are “caught being kind.”

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Center Hill Middle School readily disseminates information to parents, which works to foster greater student success. They achieve this by contacting parents/guardians as a whole group, as well as on an individualized level, in order to address concerns about student development and to express praise for their successes. Parent involvement is achieved in numerous ways at CHMS, some of which include: parent conferencing (seen as an “open-door” policy that works both ways), paper documentation (progress reports, report cards, letters home), annual open house, 6th grade orientation, 5th grade school tours, middle school math night, transition meetings, and media sources (teacher websites, school website, Remind101).

All of the different avenues for parental involvement allow guardians the comfort of knowing that any questions or concerns they may have will be addressed, which fosters open communication between parents, staff, and administration. In return, this allows for clarification or support for students who may not have felt comfortable asking these questions on their own. This results in greater responsibility, effort, and motivation on the student’s part and it allows students to begin the year on the “right foot,” while also providing needed support throughout the year.

Center Hill Middle School utilizes community outreach, through many school organizations, to help students grow relationally and socially, as opposed to focusing only on their academic well-being. Some

outreach projects our student body have been involved with include: Shoebox for Soldiers, FedEx House toy donations, disaster relief for Hurricane Harvey victims in Texas and Louisiana, food drives for the local Olive Branch Food Pantry, singing at nursing/retirement homes during the holidays, and bringing awareness to the number of abused/neglected children in our community by collaborating with The Healing Hearts Child Advocacy Center.

Our school not only believes in outreach, but also in reach. We have helped school families displaced from fire by providing clothing and essential daily needs as well as by providing food for our elementary sister school students who would otherwise go hungry.

Center Hill Middle School believes that by connecting with their community, students will begin to understand a new level of responsibility. The more connected our students are with other people, especially people who are in need, the more they understand what responsibility they have to their fellow man. Community involvement helps students realize the need for succeeding in school, so, they can be prepared for a future outside of the education system.

3. Professional Development:

Center Hill Middle School's professional development philosophy is based on building capacity in teachers and to develop leaders at all levels of instruction. Teachers and administrators participate in bi-weekly meetings of Professional Learning Communities to analyze data used to drive classroom instruction. These meetings are meant to determine student achievement using a variety of formative and summative assessment measures, as well as periodic progress monitoring of student reading levels. In response to these data, teachers explore new teaching strategies and recent literature to plan future lessons, share ideas and methods, and determine which students need remediation or intervention. In addition to PLC meetings, teachers participate in weekly common planning sessions. Teachers are also provided with multiple professional development opportunities on the district level to collaborate with teachers of the same grade and subject at different schools.

Due to the implementation of new science standards, our teachers were encouraged to attend monthly meetings to study the new curriculum, collaborate with other teachers around the district, and participate in the adoption of new textbooks. Social Studies teachers will have the same opportunities in the upcoming academic year.

Teachers are also encouraged to work with the district curriculum specialists who are available to co-teach, model teach, or plan with teachers individually. The specialists also visit classrooms to provide constructive feedback to teachers.

A recent school focus has been to equip teachers to use technology more effectively. Teachers need the ability to be mobile in the classroom to check for understanding and help students to remain on task as well as promote collaborative learning. CHMS teachers want to be able to break away from their white boards and be more hands on with students in all subject areas. The district provides its school with technology coaches. These coaches listen to the needs and wants of the educators and try to find technology or technological applications that can achieve the desired results. The technology coaches have worked with and demonstrated the benefits of programs or technological applications that allow them to be more mobile. With these programs, students and teachers become more hands on. Students that are engaged in a manipulative lesson are also less likely to be off task. Students are allowed to manipulate text items, word problems, and maps to create a better understanding of standards being presented. This also provides students with the opportunities for peer to peer learning as well as appealing to students with various learning styles.

4. School Leadership:

The principal's leadership philosophy can be described in a word: Expectations. He has high expectations for the staff, the students, and himself. He reminds the staff and students often of the expectations that are laid out for them. Center Hill Middle School has been an "A" school in the state of Mississippi for several

years, thus, the expectation to be successful is already high. Banners noting this accomplishment adorn the main concourse of the school. While being successful in the classroom is important, there are also expectations for outside of the classrooms as well. Mustang Must Do's were created for the classroom, library, hallways, and the CHMS Fine Dining Hall. These lay out the expectations for students in each part of the students' day. Students and staff are also reminded that when they are at school sponsored events or even non-school sponsored events, they are still going to be recognized as being a part of CHMS. This builds consistency across the school and is crucial to our success.

The principal and two assistant principals meet regularly to discuss progress and expectation monitoring. The principal is in charge of monitoring the English department, one assistant principal is in charge of monitoring the Math department, the other assistant principal monitors the Content areas as well as the Special Education department. During administrative meetings, the principals look at student and teacher data such as test scores and evaluations. Student test scores are compared to previous test scores as well as grades taken in class to check for growth and monitor progress of expectations. Teacher evaluations are discussed to see what, if any, areas a teacher can improve on to aid in professional growth as well as student growth.

A leadership decision had to be made regarding a teacher that was going to be deployed for military service. After studying teacher certifications and possible replacements, the principal made the decision to restructure the Science department after Christmas break. Teachers and students were informed of the decision before Christmas break. While the change was made in the middle of the school year, the students and staff knew the expectations had not changed. After looking at Case 21 data following the Spring assessment, the principal was able to determine that students made strides and continued to grow. Therefore, we use multiple forms of data to drive our decision making in addition to the frequent collaboration of our team.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Center Hill Middle School maximizes student achievement through collective efficacy. Faculty and staff believe in working together to instill expectations of excellence for all students in the areas of academics, character, and behavior. Additionally, administrators understand the importance of a school culture that values teachers as professionals.

As such, administration focuses on cultivating school wide teacher leaders who are valued for their experience and educational expertise. This mutual professional respect then allows educators professional autonomy in their classrooms. By modeling the benefits of this autonomy for students, students learn to accept responsibility for their own education, translating to a stronger sense of self-confidence and a correlating self-expectation of achievement in each student.

All faculty and staff adhere to the belief all students have the ability to succeed. With this belief in mind, educators work collaboratively to design and deliver curriculum content based on research supported best practices. Student choice is a large factor in academic tasks, including assessment. This choice allows students to display their academic strengths and reiterates student ownership for their own learning.

Further, faculty and administration acknowledge a thriving school environment hinges on communication among professionals in all areas of the school. Teacher leaders representing each discipline serve as liaisons between faculty and administration and meet weekly with administration to address faculty concerns. In addition, the school has established Professional Learning Communities for each discipline. The time allotted for these meetings allows teachers not only to discuss content specific instruction, but also allows teachers to share new and inventive instructional strategies. During these meetings, teachers share not only their professional strengths but also self-evaluated areas where they see opportunities for professional growth. In turn, the teachers work together to support each other to help all teachers meet their professional growth goals. This faculty support leads to teachers feeling more confident to try new strategies in their classrooms, which in turn leads to student success.

Just as faculty establishes an environment for professional risk taking, teachers also strive to build classroom environments where students feel free to take academic risks. Because of the encouraging environment existing not only throughout the school but also in individual classrooms, students feel safe pushing themselves out of their comfort zones and grow exponentially. The collective belief among administration, faculty, staff, students, and stakeholders is that working together, the Center Hill Middle School family is capable of reaching unprecedented success.